United Nations S/PV.5607

Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5607th meeting

Friday, 22 December 2006, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Al-Nasser	(Qatar)
Members:	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Ikouebe
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Ghana	Nana Effah-Apenteng
	Greece	Mr. Vassilakis
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Emyr Jones Parry
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mr. Mahiga
	United States of America	Mr. Wolff

Agenda

Tribute to the outgoing Secretary-General

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

06-67910 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Tribute to the outgoing Secretary-General

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I welcome the presence of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, at this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2006/1011, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations. It is my understanding that the Council is ready to take a decision on the draft resolution.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Security Council to adopt draft resolution S/2006/1011 by acclamation?

There being no objection, I declare the draft resolution adopted by acclamation, as resolution 1733 (2006).

It is so decided.

I shall now make a statement on behalf of the Council.

Mr. Secretary-General, it gives me great pleasure to express to Your Excellency, on behalf of all Security Council members, our profound gratitude for the dedicated service and commitment you provided to the United Nations as you discharged your awesome responsibility under its Charter during your 10-year tenure as Secretary-General. We should also like to express our appreciation for the high professional and personal qualities and moral leadership that you brought to the United Nations as the world's top diplomat.

We should further like to recall your active and efficient support to the work of the Council and the efforts you expended to further its objectives and for that, Mr. Secretary-General, we express our deep gratitude.

Ladies and Gentlemen, as we pay a special tribute to the Secretary-General at the end of his successful term, it is befitting to reflect in retrospect on the past decade, one that saw global crises and challenges to the international community.

The time the Secretary-General spent in office was a period marked by new and special threats, challenges and changes in the international arena. As a global leader with creative vision, Mr. Annan rose steadfastly to the challenge and contributed to numerous global efforts to face those threats and changes.

Mr. Annan guided this international Organization through the dawn of the new millennium. A remarkable event that marked that juncture was the adoption by the Millennium Summit of what came to be known as the Millennium Development Goals. Those goals set by Member States immediately became top priorities for the Secretary-General, who contributed more than any one else to their realization.

Mr. Annan was at the helm of this international Organization during the past decade, which coincided, more or less, with the timespan between the Organization's golden and diamond jubilees. As one would expect, that period was marked by a great many reviews, assessments and re-evaluations of the United Nations. At the organizational level, the decade was characterized by intensive and considerable attention to reform in all its aspects. To his great credit, Mr. Annan led the reform movement with quiet deliberation and introduced many initiatives aimed at strengthening the United Nations system and enhancing its capacity to meet the major challenges of our time.

Mr. Annan received wide recognition for his dedication to the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. His sustained efforts towards the maintenance of international peace and security, towards finding lasting solutions to various complex disputes and conflicts around the globe, and towards the development of friendly relations among nations, are just a few examples.

During his tenure as Secretary-General, Mr. Annan endeavoured relentlessly to solve the economic, social, cultural and environmental issues facing our world today. His great concern was to meet the humanitarian needs of people affected by both natural and man-made disasters. He contributed significantly to the promotion and protection of human rights and

fundamental freedoms for all, so that peoples of the world can enjoy living in greater freedom.

In a few days, the current Secretary-General will pass the baton on to his successor, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, who, I am confident, will also perform an exemplary job and bring bold perspectives, new ideas and critical and vital initiatives to the United Nations and the international community. We pledge and commit our strong support to him, as we have done over the years to Mr. Annan.

Mr. Secretary-General, we extend to Your Excellency our warmest wishes for further advancement, health and prosperity, and wish you the best of luck as you leave the United Nations and continue your invaluable contribution to the resolution of issues of concern to both the Organization and the global community.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan.

The Secretary-General: Mr. President, let me thank you for those very kind words. And I thank you also for proposing the resolution that the Council has just passed, by which, needless to say, I am deeply honoured.

Barring unforeseen crises in the next nine days — which in this Council, of all places, one should never rule out — today's meeting will be my last meeting with you as Secretary-General. I must thank the Council, not only for using this meeting to pass such a generous resolution, but also for making it coincide with another decision that you are about to adopt, namely the resolution to extend the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone (UNIOSIL).

Sierra Leone is definitely one of the success stories of our work together. But those of us who remember the anxious days of May 2000 know well that that was far from being a foregone conclusion. But today Sierra Leone is an example of what can be achieved by the United Nations and its Member States working closely together. The country is stable but still fragile. It needs our continued help in building effective State institutions, especially those dealing with security, human rights, justice, and the preparation for next year's elections, which will be a critical moment in the consolidation of peace. So, I thank the Council for agreeing to prolong the United Nations role in Sierra Leone. And I thank the Council for all the work it has done for peace and security around the world.

In my 10 years as Secretary-General, I have quite often allowed myself to make some critical remarks about this Council, particularly about its composition. I still hope that such composition will be modified, since I am convinced that, with a more democratic and representative character, the Council will gain even greater legitimacy, and its authority will be more widely respected.

I have also occasionally criticized the Council's actions, or, more often, its failure to act. And I have tried, following the excellent example of the Brahimi Report, to tell the Council what it needs to know, not what it wants to hear.

Yet I know that the "primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security", with which the Charter endows the Council, is not an easy one to bear. In fact, it is much easier to criticize the Council from outside than to take decisions in it. In spite of that, the Council's members have generally listened to me with surprising good grace.

And I must also recognize that the work of the Council has been greatly strengthened during the 10 years of my service. The mandates it has given us have been more coherent, more robust when required, and often matched with something like the necessary resources required. And its members now follow up on their decisions with greater vigilance, demanding full reports from me and my colleagues on the missions they have mandated, and sometimes going to see for themselves on the spot how things are going.

The Council has also passed some very important thematic resolutions — I think especially of resolution 1325 (2000) on the role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peacebuilding — and it is generally much more cognizant of the need to prevent conflict, rather than wait to react after it occurs.

We have all learned from some bitter experiences that we cannot afford to uncritically accept a Government's word when it assures us that all is well in its country, or that it has the situation under control. We have also learned that the Council needs to be fully briefed on issues of human rights, since gross violations of human rights not only occur during conflict but are often the harbingers of conflict.

There is certainly no room for complacency. As I said last week, it is painful for me to leave office with the Middle East in such a fragile and dangerous condition.

I do fervently hope that we are now at last close to rescuing the people of Darfur from their agony. The reports I have received from my envoy in Khartoum, Mr. Ould Abdallah, encourage me to think we may tomorrow receive a green light from President Bashir for a full ceasefire, a renewed effort to bring all parties into the political process, and deployment of the proposed hybrid African Union-United Nations force to protect the population. We will, however, need to see the document that Mr. Ould Abdallah will bring.

But after so many disappointments, I must say that I take nothing for granted. What I do know is that the Council will continue to work, ably helped by my successor, on these and many other crises. But there is no cause for despair, either. While change for the worse is often dramatic, change for the better is generally incremental. Many conflicts have been peacefully resolved. Many have been at least brought under control, with hope for better times on the horizon. And I believe — though this is much harder to prove — that many have been prevented.

At all events, it remains the sacred and exalting duty of this Organization to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war. It has been my privilege to share this effort with the Security Council, both in success and in failure. I now relinquish that task, with relief but not without regret. And I pray that the Security Council will have ever greater success in the future.

The President (*spoke in Arabic*): I thank the Secretary-General for his statement.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 10.45 a.m.